



What emergency responders need to know about Africanized honeybees

What are Africanized honeybees?

The Africanized honeybee is a hybrid of one of several European honeybee subspecies and the African honeybee. In 1956, a geneticist brought African queens to Brazil with the idea of developing a superior honeybee more suited to tropical conditions. Bees from 26 experimental stations interbred in the wild with European honeybees, resulting in Africanized offspring.

Should emergency responders be concerned about the Africanized honeybee?

These bees have spread throughout most of South America, Mexico, southern Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. They also have been detected in Oklahoma and Arkansas. If you see honeybees now, you will probably see Africanized honeybees if they move into your area. The common sighting is to see a swarm of bees as they look for a new home, either flying about or resting on a tree branch or railing. However, it is impossible for the average person to distinguish an Africanized honeybee from a European honeybee.

The Africanized honeybee is extremely aggressive when defending its colony. At any perceived threat, the Africanized honeybee can swarm out of the colony and attack. A person walking within 50 feet of a colony can trigger an attack. Operating power tools or lawn equipment as far as 100 feet from a hive can trigger an attack. It's not unheard of for a swarm of Africanized honeybees to chase a victim up to a half mile.

Are Africanized honeybees the “killer bees” I’ve seen on the news and in movies?

Yes and no. The two names do refer to the same bee, but the term “killer bee” is a name Hollywood made famous. However, because of their extremely aggressive nature, a swarm of Africanized honeybees is likely to deliver more stings than a swarm of European honeybees.

Is one sting from an Africanized honeybee deadly?

No. One sting is no more or less painful or dangerous than a sting from any other honeybee. The venom from the two types of honeybees are almost identical, but Africanized honeybees sting in greater numbers with less provocation than the honeybees we are used to in the United States.

Reporting an Incident

All suspect colonies should be reported to the Kansas Department of Agriculture:

Call **Tom Sanders (785) 862-2180**
or **Glenn Salsbury (620) 231-0304**

The Kansas Department of Agriculture will help collect samples for identification or DNA testing.

County Extension may offer instruction or assistance in sampling of suspect colonies and having them identified.

Planning for Africanized Honey Bee Stinging Incidents

Emergency personnel with known allergies to stinging insects should stay away!

Response Protocol

Victim Rescue

- As emergency responders, your first objective is to keep the incident from escalating.
- The perimeter of the area must be secured. A minimum “quarantine” area of one (1) block or one-quarter mile radius from the incident must be established.
- The public must be instructed to shelter in place (inside homes, vehicles or other immediate shelter) to avoid further attacks.

On-Site Procedures

- Do not allow personnel to get close to the bees. Staying approximately 150 feet from the stinging incident is recommended.
- Assess the situation from within response vehicles. Attempt to determine if:
 - The victim is currently under attack from bees
 - The victim appears conscious
 - The victim appears to have been stung multiple times
 - There are others in danger (including other emergency personnel)
 - There are pets involved
- Call for additional help if it is needed
 - Call secondary responders for rescue
 - Call for additional ambulance assistance to transport victims if it is required.
 - Notify the receiving hospital.
 - Call for bee keeper or pest control operators for bee removal if bees are not in the open. Identify who can do this before an incident occurs and have their contact information readily available.
- While the situation is being evaluated
 - Three firefighters should be putting on full protective clothing, including bee veils or full bee suits.
 - Isolate the area and determine the “hot zone” (bees present) and “safe zone” (bees not present).

- Set up a command post in a “safe zone.”
- Evacuate the area, or block streets and roads to keep people out of the “hot zone.”
- Ambulances and unprotected emergency personnel should stay in the “safe zone.”
- **If the incident is close to a school, day care or other building with many occupants, the school principal, day care owner, or building manager should be contacted and advised to keep occupants indoors and to close any open windows or doors.**

Approach

A swarm can be quickly killed with an AFFF foam system and using a full fog pattern.

- Use a one- to three-percent spray of one of the foaming/wetting agents and a nozzle capable of delivering a wide fan pattern.
- A quick attack 1 ½ hose line must be pulled and hooked to the apparatus AFFF foam system.
- The 1 ½ hose line must be pumped at 80-100 psi at 95 gpm.
- The hose line must be pulled by the firefighters at a quick pace toward the victim, with a full fog pattern on the nozzle -- sweeping the air surrounding the firefighters and the victim.
- A light initial application to the victim will stop most of the bees from attacking on or near the victim in about 60 seconds.
- The victim should be picked up quickly while firefighters continue to sweep the surrounding air with the AFFF foam line.
- Foam should continue to be sprayed into the air and on the firefighters and the victim until all are in the “safe zone.”

If a foam system is not available, protect the victim’s head with a blanket and remove them from the “hot zone.”

Victim Transport and Aid

- Once the victim is evacuated, watch the area for live bees before loading the victim into the ambulance.
- Even in a weakened state, these bees still are able to sting.
- If a small number of bees get into the ambulance or other emergency vehicle, lower the windows as you drive so the bees can escape.
- Once the victim is secured in an ambulance, follow established protocols and watch for signs of shock or allergic reactions.
- **Remove any stinger carefully using a credit card or very dull knife (do not squeeze the stinger to remove it).**
- Remember! Be careful not to swat or crush the bees. Other bees are attracted to the pheromones released when a bee is crushed.
- **Anyone who is stung 15 or more times should receive medical attention**

Follow Up

Maintain control of the scene until the threat of bee stings to the public no longer exists.

- If a bee-control specialist is called to remove a colony from a structure or tree, the site should remain secured until the public is no longer at risk.
- It may take several hours for bees to calm down before a colony can be removed.
- Emergency responders should be extra careful around electric meters and electrical boxes. Electricity and water do not mix!

**Bee Removal
Specialized Response Personnel**

An emergency contact list of specialized responders should be kept by dispatch and by local fire, police and emergency medical service departments and/or agencies. Beekeepers and pest control personnel should be contacted to ensure they are qualified and equipped to handle Africanized bees before they are added to the list.

Name	Address	Work Number	Cell Phone	Home Phone	Pager

AT RISK Personnel

Emergency personnel with known allergies to stinging insects should stay away!

ALL emergency responders known to be allergic to bee stings should be kept away from the incident. List below any individuals who are allergic and should not respond to bee sting incidents.

DO NOT DEPLOY					
Name	Address	Work Number	Cell Phone	Home Phone	Pager

Dispatch Center

Africanized Honey Bee - Information Collection Protocol
Caller: _____
Call back number: _____
Incident Location: _____
Number of people stung: _____
Is the incident close to a school, day care center, nursing home, or shopping center (200 feet or less)?
School: _____
Daycare: _____
Nursing Home: _____
Shopping Center: _____
Where is the victim(s) located?
Where are the bees located or coming from? (This may not be the same area where the victim is located.)
Response agency to be notified: <input type="checkbox"/> Police Department or Sheriff's Office <input type="checkbox"/> EMS <input type="checkbox"/> Fire Department <input type="checkbox"/> Other

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